Thos Steele?

Ayr April 4/56.

My Dear James

Your fav of 17th ult enclosing draft for £50 to a/c of shipment of potatoes came duly to hand & is placed to credit with thanks. I am very sorry that you have had so much trouble with this shipment from first to last. –

We are all very sorry to hear of poor Williams illness & from what you mention have very little hope of hearing of his recovery – has he any acquaintances in Florida or how is he situated – please give us full particulars as we feel very anxious to hear – it will be very distressing to Mother to think of his dying so far away & amongst strangers –

My Mother in Law Mrs McCrath died very suddenly last week – from a stroke of apoplexy she only survived it about 5 hours – did not suffer much after the first stroke but just seemed to doze away – how true it is that in the midst of life we are in death – really we should be prepared to die for we know not how soon the summons may come

I am sorry to learn that your Father will lose so heavily from the fall in flour — the prospect of peace has had a wonderful influence in depressing value of Grain but now that the news is confirmed & peace certain we have Markets rather firmer & I suppose prices on yr side are very much influenced by the tenor of advices from here — so perhaps the losses may not turn out so heavy — I hold a large quantity of Oat Meal on which there will be pretty heavy loss if prices dont improve but we must just make up our minds to take things as they come, no use in fretting. I think we will soon have a more favourable time for business operations, as the war is concluded money will likely become more abundant & cheap which will encourage an extension of mercantile enterprises — business generally has been in a very depressed condition in this Country for the past year or so. — I will remember you to Gilbert [illegible] when I see him which I do very seldom now

I do not at present recollect of any news here that would interest you. Mother is a much better Correspondent than me – I send you a copy of yesterday's paper. You never mention how Mrs Goldie & the children are from which we infer that they are well – I think you are right not to move from your present situation until business is in a more satisfactory position –

With kindest regards to Mrs G. & self

Believe me

Yours very sincerely

Cousin Tom

Steele-?

P.S.

I had a visit about 2 Mo. since from one of ye young Men belonging to Catrine, he had come home for his health but intends going out again – he found the old country not at all to his mind –

P.S. 2. Uncle A. (alex?) is at present at Liverpool looking out for a ship – he is very far from fortunate poor Man – I hope he may become more so for the future